



DIOCESE OF AMARILLO

Safe Environment Office

Code of Pastoral Conduct

Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Pastoral Conduct and the Safe Environment Policy, as a condition of my service in the Diocese of Amarillo. While the below is to be applied specifically on the behalf of minors and vulnerable adults for their wellbeing; none-the-less it is must be considered appropriate behavior with any and all persons regardless as to their age or gender who are entrusted to our Catholic institutions.

As Church Personnel be it **Clergy, Staff, or Volunteer, I will:**

- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with minors.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with minors.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from minors or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor or administration.
- Refrain from giving expensive gifts to minors without prior written approval from the parents or guardian and the pastor or administrator.
- Report suspected abuse to the pastor, administrator, or appropriate supervisor and the local Child Protection Services agency. I understand that failure to report suspected abuse to civil authorities is, according to the law, a misdemeanor.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of minors.

As Church Personnel be it **Clergy, Staff, or Volunteer, I will not:**

- Touch and/or exploit minors or any person in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Expose or participate with minors and/or adults in pornography (explicit or otherwise), via cybersex, phone sex, sexting, etc., in person, photographing, nor via email, text messages, video chat, or any other form of electronic communication or printed material.
- Engage in one-to-one electronic communications with a minor without a copy-count made available to the appropriate member of the Diocesan, Parish, School staff, and/or parent.
- Pose any health risk to minors (i.e., no fevers or other contagious situations.)
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, frighten or degrade minors.
- Use any physical discipline such as: striking, spanking, shaking, or slapping minors.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs (including marijuana) at any time.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while volunteering.
- Smoke, VAP, or use tobacco products in the presence of minors.
- Use profane, sexual, romantic, or other inappropriate speech in the presence of minors.
- Drive or ride in a vehicle with an unaccompanied, non-relative, minor.

I understand that working with children, or youth, I am subject to a background check including criminal history. I understand that any action inconsistent with the Code of Conduct and Safe Environment Policy or failure to take actions as so mandated may result in my removal as a Church Personnel in the Diocese of Amarillo.